



## **TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **Office of Safe & Supportive Schools**

6th Floor, Andrew Johnson Tower  
710 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, TN 37243

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# **Annual Alternative Education Report** (School Year 2010-2011)

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*Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education*

*March 2012*

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Printable report also available on our website at:  
<http://state.tn.us/education/learningsupport/alted.shtml>

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## Annual Alternative Education Report (2010-2011 School Year)

### Introduction

*Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404* requires that at least one alternative school or program be established for districts serving students in grades seven through twelve and also allows LEAs to create alternative schools or programs for grades one through six. Additionally, *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404* provides that the Advisory Council make an annual report to the Governor, the General Assembly, the Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of Education on the status of alternative education in Tennessee. The report presented herewith meets the legislative requirement set forth.

To obtain the needed data, the Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education, in conjunction with the Department of Education, developed the *2010-2011 Annual Alternative Education Survey*. A copy of the survey has been included as Appendix A. When reporting on alternative education, districts used the definition supplied by the Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education which states "**A nontraditional academic program or school designed to meet the student's educational, behavioral, and social needs.**" Operating under this definition, districts reported on various aspects of their alternative education programming. Information presented in this report summarizes surveys provided by Tennessee school districts.

In addition to collecting data on current programming at the local level, districts were also asked a series of questions related to their current needs in the field. Those major findings have also been included in this report. Additionally, the reader will find an historical background of alternative education in Tennessee, current trends in the field, and stories of success..

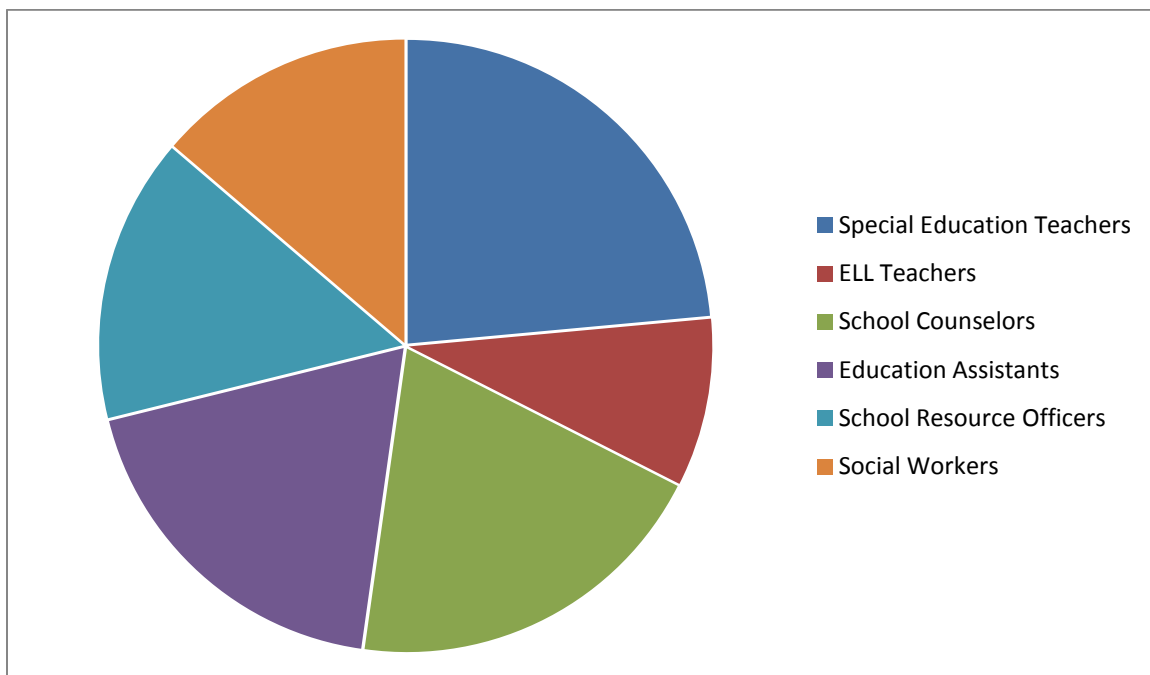
Questions regarding this report may be directed to James Vince Witty, Executive Secretary for the Advisory Council. Mr. Witty may be reached by phone at (615) 741-3248 or via email to [james.witty@tn.gov](mailto:james.witty@tn.gov).

### Survey Results/Findings

The annual alternative education survey was distributed to all Tennessee school districts and has been included as Appendix A. The survey to districts required each LEA to identify an alternative education coordinator, thereby providing a framework for networking, collaboration, training, and technical assistance. To review the designee for every Tennessee district please visit Appendix B.

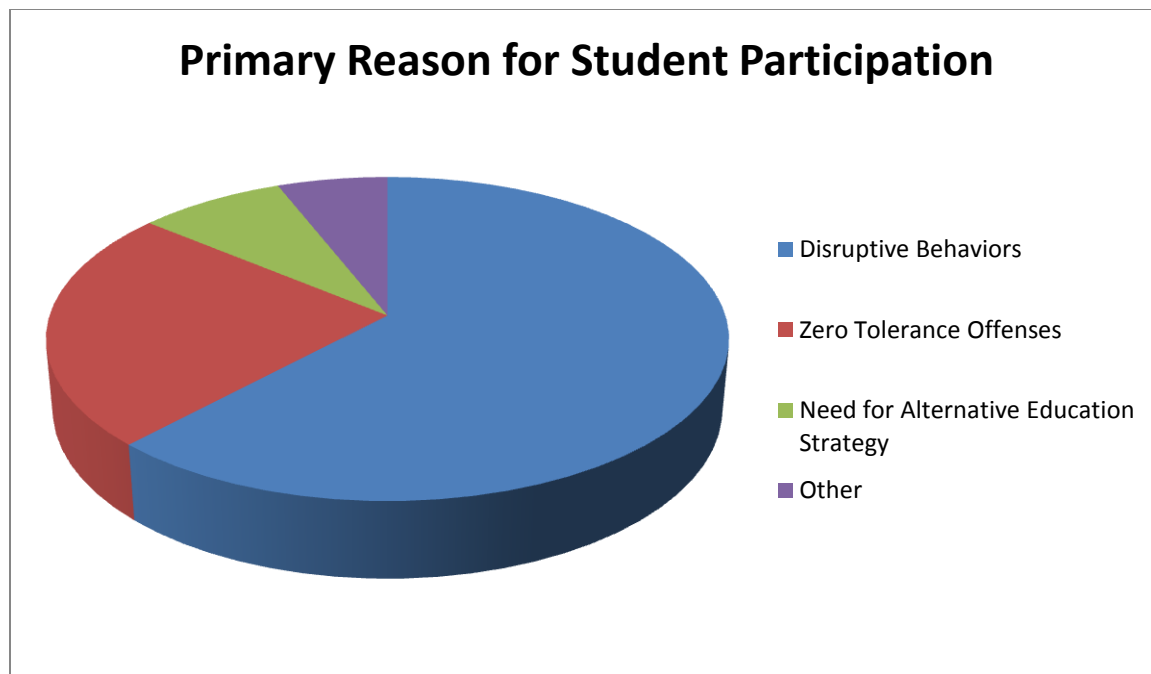
Based upon the responses from districts, findings indicate that there are (276) alternative schools and/or programs. This translates to (906) classrooms solely dedicated to providing alternative education services. The total number served in an alternative setting last school year was (19,693) students. Districts have (11,938) seats in an alternative school or program, indicating that some placements are less than one school year.

On the survey, districts were also asked to distinguish between the various types of professionals providing services to students in the alternative school or program. Statewide, there were (870) certified teachers serving students. Of those certified teachers, (137) were certified special education teachers, and (52) were certified ELL teachers. School counselors are also working with alternative education students (115 statewide). Other groups providing alternative education services include (409) non-certified staff in which (110) were education assistants, (88) were school resource officers (SROs), and (80) were social workers. For a summary of those findings please see Table 1.



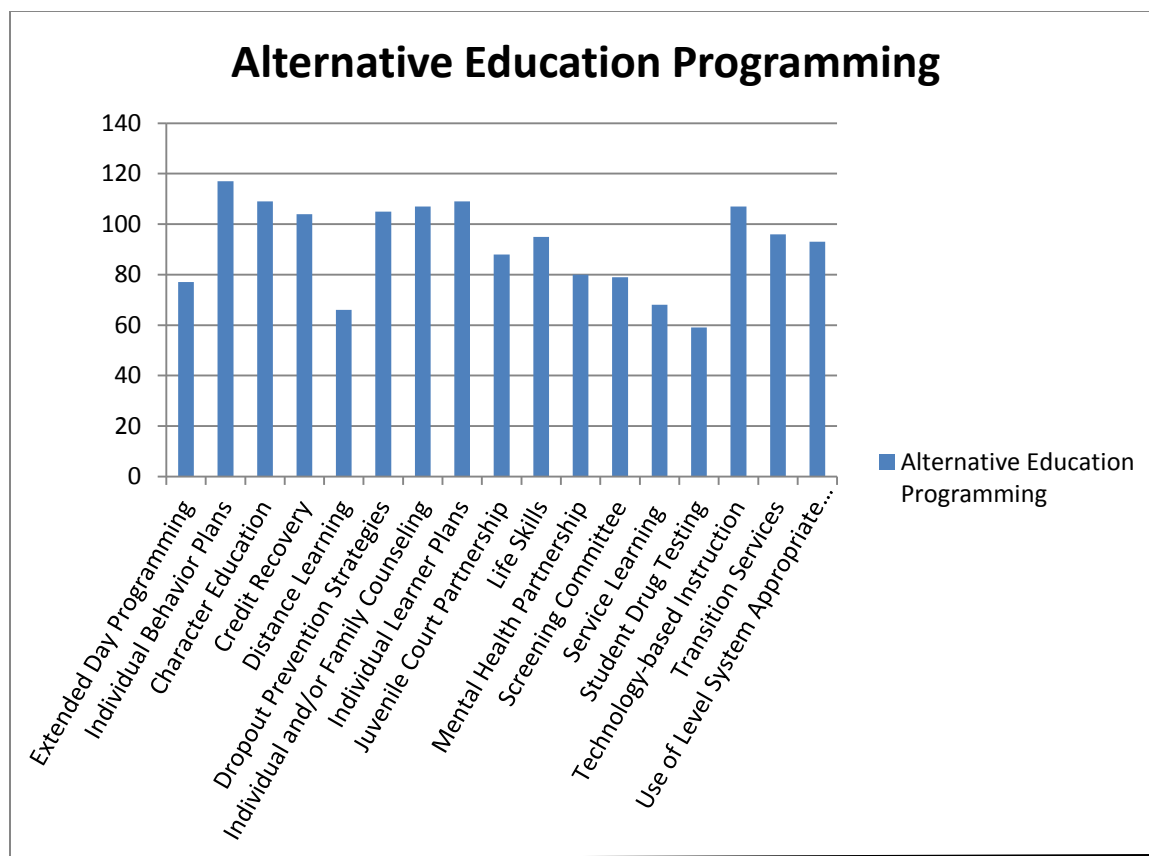
*Table 1: Professionals Serving Students in an Alternative Setting*

Districts were asked to rate the primary reason for student participation in the alternative school or program. The number one reason for attendance was a culmination of *disruptive behavior(s)* (62 percent). The second most cited reason was for committing a *zero tolerance offense* (24 percent). The *need for an alternative education strategy* was also noted by districts (8 percent). Finally, districts noted *other circumstances warranting participation* (6 percent). Table 2 summarizes those findings.



*Table 2: Primary Reason for Student Participation*

LEAs were also asked to indicate the type of services offered in the alternative school or program. The most prevalent programming/services include the following: Individual Behavior Plans (117 reporting), Individual Learner Plans and Character Education (109 reporting), Individual and/or Family Counseling and Technology-based Instruction (107 reporting), Dropout Prevention Strategies (105 reporting), Credit Recovery (104 reporting), Transition Services (96 reporting), Life Skills (95 reporting), and Use of Level System Appropriate Behavior (93 reporting). Less frequently cited/offered include the following: Student Drug Testing (59 reporting), Distance Learning (66 reporting), Service Learning (68 reporting), Extended Day Programming (77 reporting), Screening Committee (79 reporting), Mental Health Partnership (80 reporting), Juvenile Court Partnership (88 reporting). Table 3 summarizes those findings.



*Table 3: Alternative Education Programming*

The survey to districts also indicated several things about the nature of alternative schools and programs across the state. Alternative education programs may be housed in a designated, separate, alternative school building that may or may not have a school number. Districts also report that alternative education programs may be self-contained within a traditional school. Moreover, alternative services may be geared toward students who have been suspended or expelled, as well as students that have dropped out of school and are reentering the education system. Even more interesting is that some alternative schools and programs have a mixture of the above elements making them a hybrid school serving various alternative programming purposes.

Educators were asked if they had established an alternative education advisory committee at the district level and 74 districts reported having an alternative education advisory committee this year. Districts were also asked what the average length of placement (stay) in the alternative setting was and 62 days was the average length of stay for students.

Finally, a history of alternative education in Tennessee is included in the annual report. A brief history of alternative education is presented in Appendix C.

**Annual Alternative Education Report  
(2010-2011 School Year)  
APPENDICES**

# Annual Alternative Education Survey (SY 2010-2011)

Appendix A

As Required by Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404



## Alternative Education as defined by the Advisory Council for Alternative Education:

"A nontraditional academic program designed to meet the student's educational, behavioral and social needs."

**Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3402** mandates "at least one (1) alternative school shall be established and available for students in grades seven through twelve (7-12) who have been suspended or expelled." **Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404** also requires that the Department of Education submit a report annually on the status of alternative education in Tennessee. In order to gain a better perspective, the following survey was developed. The information provided to the Department will be reported to the Governor, both education committees of the General Assembly, and the State Board of Education. Please complete the following survey and return it to the address listed below.

<b>School System:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>District Alternative Education Coordinator:</b>	<b>Email Address:</b>
<b>Phone Number:</b> (      )      -	<b>Fax:</b> (      )      -
<b>Address:</b>	<b>City and Zip Code:</b>
<b>Person Completing Report (if different from above):</b>	<b>Phone Number:</b> (      )      -

## ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL(S) OR PROGRAM(S) THAT OPERATED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR:

(For each alternative school/ program, please identify the principal or program coordinator and provide an email address and phone number for each. Please do not include ISS.)

Alternative School/Program Name	Principal/ Program Coordinator	Email Address of Principal/ Program Coordinator	Phone Number for School/ Program
			(      )      -
			(      )      -
			(      )      -
			(      )      -
			(      )      -
			(      )      -
			(      )      -

## PARTICIPATION (TOTAL FOR ALL SCHOOL(S)/PROGRAM(S) IN YOUR DISTRICT):

Number of <b>alternative school(s)*</b> :	
Number of <b>alternative education program(s)**</b> :	
Total number of classroom(s) serving alternative education students:	
Total number of students served:	
District's total capacity (seats):	
Average length of placement (stay) in an alternative setting (number in days):	
Number of certificated staff working in an alternative school/program:	
Number of non-certificated staff assigned to an alternative education setting:	
Has an alternative education advisory committee been established at the district level?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

\* **A facility dedicated solely to alternative education**

\*\* **An alternative education program or class within a school**

Please return all forms no later than **June 30, 2011**, to:  
James Vince Witty, Alternative Education Coordinator  
710 James Robertson Parkway, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor AJT  
Nashville, TN 37243

OR

**FAX: (615) 532 - 6638**

Please direct questions to James Vince Witty at  
615-532-4768 or [james.witty@tn.gov](mailto:james.witty@tn.gov)



Appendix A

**PRIMARY REASON FOR STUDENT ASSIGNMENT (RANK 1, 2, 3, AND 4)**

Zero tolerance offense	
Disruptive behavior	
Need for alternative education strategy	
Other (please describe in space given)	

**SCHOOL/ PROGRAM ELEMENTS PRESENT IN YOUR DISTRICT (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):**

Afterschool or other extended day programming	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual behavior plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Character education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit recovery	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distance learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dropout prevention strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual and/or family counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual learner plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Juvenile court partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Screening committee (for alternative education placements)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student drug testing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology-based instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transition services (a formal plan)*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of level system or similar behavior support mechanism that encourages appropriate behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe in space given)	

**\*Mandated requirement under Tenn. Code Ann. §49-6-3402**

**SPECIAL GROUPS SERVING THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL/PROGRAM (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

ELL Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Counselors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special Education Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Workers	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Resource Officers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching Assistants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe in space given)	

1. What models or curriculum are you currently implementing in your alternative education classroom(s)?
2. What technical assistance opportunities would help you as an alternative educator?
3. What is the greatest challenge facing your alternative education school(s)/programs(s)?
4. Additional comments/ feedback that would be appropriate for the alternative education report to the General Assembly?
5. Of the students served how many went on to graduate with a regular high school diploma during the current school year?
6. Do you see a growing need for alternatives at the elementary level? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Please return all forms no later than **June 30, 2011**, to:

James Vince Witty, Alternative Education Coordinator  
710 James Robertson Parkway, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor AJT  
Nashville, TN 37243

OR

**FAX: (615) 532 - 6638**

Please direct questions to James Vince Witty at  
615-532-4768 or [james.witty@tn.gov](mailto:james.witty@tn.gov)

Appendix B: District Alternative Education Coordinators

School System	Coordinator	E-mail	Phone
Alcoa City	Brian Gossett	<a href="mailto:bgossett@alcoaschools.net">bgossett@alcoaschools.net</a>	(865) 238-1080
Anderson County	Sue Voskamp	<a href="mailto:svoskamp@acs.ac">svoskamp@acs.ac</a>	(865) 463-2800
Athens City	Joseph Debity	<a href="mailto:debityj@k12tn.net">debityj@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 745-2443
Bedford County	Missy Eakin	<a href="mailto:eakinm@bedfordk12tn.net">eakinm@bedfordk12tn.net</a>	(931) 684-3284
Benton County	Randy Shannon	<a href="mailto:randy.shannon@tennk12.net">randy.shannon@tennk12.net</a>	(731) 584-4492
Bledsoe County	Jack Roberson	<a href="mailto:jackroberson@k12tn.net">jackroberson@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 447-2914
Blount County	T. Daniel Gayon	<a href="mailto:gaylond@blountk12.org">gaylond@blountk12.org</a>	(865) 984-9420
Bradford SSD	Shane Paschall	<a href="mailto:paschalls2@k12tn.net">paschalls2@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 742-3152
Bradley County	Zoe Renfro	<a href="mailto:zrenfro@bradley.schools.org">zrenfro@bradley.schools.org</a>	(423) 473-8473
Bristol City	Dr. Annette Tudor	<a href="mailto:tudora@btcs.org">tudora@btcs.org</a>	(423) 652-9202
Campbell County	Larry Nidiffer	<a href="mailto:nidifferl@k12tn.net">nidifferl@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 562-8377
Cannon County	Barbara Parker	<a href="mailto:barbara.parker@ccstn.com">barbara.parker@ccstn.com</a>	(615) 563-5752
Carroll County	Jason Smith	<a href="mailto:jsmith@carrollschools.com">jsmith@carrollschools.com</a>	(731) 986-8908
Carter County	Danny McClain	<a href="mailto:dannymcclain@k12tn.net">dannymcclain@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 547-4000
Cheatham County	Jo Jones	<a href="mailto:jonesj@cheatham.k12.tn.us">jonesj@cheatham.k12.tn.us</a>	(615) 746-1424
Chester County	Bobby Helton	<a href="mailto:bheltonb2@tennk12.n35">bheltonb2@tennk12.n35</a>	(731) 989-8144
Claiborne County	Susan Essary	<a href="mailto:essary1@k12tn.net">essary1@k12tn.net</a>	(426) 626-3543
Clarksville-Montgomery County	David Turner	<a href="mailto:david.turner@cmcass.net">david.turner@cmcass.net</a>	(931) 542-5057
Clay County	Steve Chitwood	<a href="mailto:chitwoods@k12tn.net">chitwoods@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 243-5516
Cleveland City	Larry Payne	<a href="mailto:lpayne@clevelandschools.org">lpayne@clevelandschools.org</a>	(423) 347-2951
Cocke County	Paul Cogburn	<a href="mailto:cogburnp01@k12tn.net">cogburnp01@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 623-7821
Coffee County	Major Shelton	<a href="mailto:sheltonm@k12coffee.net">sheltonm@k12coffee.net</a>	(931) 723-5189
Crockett County	Jared Foust	<a href="mailto:foustj@ccschools.net">foustj@ccschools.net</a>	(731) 696-2604
Cumberland County	Rocco Zazzaro	<a href="mailto:zazzaror@k12tn.net">zazzaror@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 456-1228
Dayton City	Mike Latham	<a href="mailto:lathammi@daytonCity.net">lathammi@daytonCity.net</a>	(423) 775-8414
Decatur County	Jeff Melton	<a href="mailto:jeff.melton@tennk12.net">jeff.melton@tennk12.net</a>	(731) 847-6437
DeKalb County	Marshall Ferrell	<a href="mailto:ferrellm@k12tn.net">ferrellm@k12tn.net</a>	(615) 579-4059
Dickson County	John Gunn	<a href="mailto:jgunn@dcbe.org">jgunn@dcbe.org</a>	(615) 446-7571
Dyer County	See Dyersburg City	-	
Dyersburg City	Danny Walden	<a href="mailto:dwalden@k12tn.net">dwalden@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 286-3600
Elizabethton City	Corey Gardenhour	<a href="mailto:gardenhourc@k12tn.net">gardenhourc@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 547-8000
Etowah City	Melasawn Saffels	<a href="mailto:specialeducation@etowahcityschool.com">specialeducation@etowahcityschool.com</a>	(423) 263-5483
Fayette County	Terry Williams	<a href="mailto:williamst@mail.fayette.k12.tn.us">williamst@mail.fayette.k12.tn.us</a>	(901) 465-5260
Fayetteville City	Rickey Shelton	<a href="mailto:sheltonr@fcsboe.org">sheltonr@fcsboe.org</a>	(931) 433-5542
Fentress County	Kaye O'Brien	<a href="mailto:kobrien@fentress.k12tn.net">kobrien@fentress.k12tn.net</a>	(931) 879-5082
Franklin County	Linda Foster	<a href="mailto:linda.foster@fcstn.net">linda.foster@fcstn.net</a>	(931) 967-0626
Franklin SSD	Annie Sawyers	<a href="mailto:sawyersa@fssd.org">sawyersa@fssd.org</a>	(615) 794-6624
Gibson County SSD	Chad Jackson	<a href="mailto:jacksonc11@k12tn.net">jacksonc11@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 692-3803
Giles County	Susan Boyd	<a href="mailto:sboyd@giles.k12.tn.us">sboyd@giles.k12.tn.us</a>	(931) 424-7022
Grainger County	Keith Lamb	<a href="mailto:klamb1@k12tn.net">klamb1@k12tn.net</a>	(865) 828-3611
Greene County	Angelo Botta	<a href="mailto:bottaa@greeneK12.org">bottaa@greeneK12.org</a>	(423) 798-2646
Greeneville City	Jeff Townsley	<a href="mailto:townsleyj@gcschools.net">townsleyj@gcschools.net</a>	(423) 787-8009

## Appendix B: District Alternative Education Coordinators

Grundy County	Judy Fults	<a href="mailto:jafults@blomand.net">jafults@blomand.net</a>	(931) 692-5427
Hamblen County	Tami Tasker	<a href="mailto:ttasker@hcboe.net">ttasker@hcboe.net</a>	(423) 585-3785
Hamilton County	Rodney Knox	<a href="mailto:knox_rodney@hcdoe.org">knox_rodney@hcdoe.org</a>	(423) 983-3520
Hancock County	Mike Antrican	<a href="mailto:mantrican@k12tn.net">mantrican@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 733-4611
Hardeman County	Steve Gibson	<a href="mailto:gibsons4@k12tn.net">gibsons4@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 658-2510
Hardin County	Charles Patton	<a href="mailto:pattonc5@k12tn.net">pattonc5@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 925-3940
Hawkins County	Gloria Silvers	<a href="mailto:silversg@hck12.net">silversg@hck12.net</a>	(423) 272-7629
Haywood County	Mary Hood	<a href="mailto:hood@k12tn.net">hood@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 772-9613
Henderson County	David Weatherford	<a href="mailto:weatherford@k12tn.net">weatherford@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 967-9527
Henry County	Michael Poteete	<a href="mailto:poteetem@k12tn.net">poteetem@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 642-7500
Hickman County	Greg McCord	<a href="mailto:mccordg@hickman.k12tn.net">mccordg@hickman.k12tn.net</a>	(931) 729-3391
Hollow Rock-Bruceton	See Carroll County	-	
Houston County	Cathy Harvey	<a href="mailto:harveyc@k12tn.net">harveyc@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 289-4748
Humboldt City	Wayne McLemore	<a href="mailto:wayne.mclemore@humboldt.com">wayne.mclemore@humboldt.com</a>	(731) 784-2652
Humphreys County	Daniel Moran	<a href="mailto:morand@hcss.org">morand@hcss.org</a>	(931) 296-2568
Huntingdon SSD	Steve Peery	<a href="mailto:perrys@k12tn.net">perrys@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 986-2222
Jackson County	Jimmie Apple	<a href="mailto:japple@k12tn.net">japple@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 268-6762
Jackson-Madison County	Portia Hegman	<a href="mailto:pjhegmon@jmcss.org">pjhegmon@jmcss.org</a>	(731) 664-2534
Jefferson County	Mandy Schneitman	<a href="mailto:schneitmanm@k12tn.net">schneitmanm@k12tn.net</a>	(865) 397-3194
Johnson City	Janie Snyder	<a href="mailto:snyderj@jcschools.org">snyderj@jcschools.org</a>	(423) 434-5585
Johnson County	Lisa Arnold	<a href="mailto:arnoldl@k12tn.net">arnoldl@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 727-2620
Kingsport City	Debi Tabor	<a href="mailto:dtabor@k12k.com">dtabor@k12k.com</a>	(423) 378-2155
Knox County	Walter Mencer	<a href="mailto:mencerw1@k12tn.net">mencerw1@k12tn.net</a>	(865) 594-1614
Lake County	Bret Johnson	<a href="mailto:johnsonb11@k12tn.us">johnsonb11@k12tn.us</a>	(731) 253-6601
Lauderdale County	Shirley Robinson	<a href="mailto:srobinson@lced.net">srobinson@lced.net</a>	(731) 635-4821
Lawrence County	Mickey Dunn	<a href="mailto:mdunn@lcass.us">mdunn@lcass.us</a>	(931) 762-3581
Lebanon SSD	Scott Benson	<a href="mailto:bensons1@k12tn.net">bensons1@k12tn.net</a>	(615) 449-5673
Lenoir City	Janet McGee	<a href="mailto:jmcgee@lenoircityschools.com">jmcgee@lenoircityschools.com</a>	(865) 986-2072
Lewis County	Dean Heady	<a href="mailto:dean.heady@tennk12.net">dean.heady@tennk12.net</a>	(931) 796-3264
Lexington City	James McAdams	<a href="mailto:mcadamsj3@caywood.org">mcadamsj3@caywood.org</a>	(731) 967-5591
Lincoln County	Linda Tallman	<a href="mailto:ltallman@lcdoe.org">ltallman@lcdoe.org</a>	(931) 433-3565
Loudon County	Tom Hankinson	<a href="mailto:hankinsont@loudoncounty.org">hankinsont@loudoncounty.org</a>	(865) 986-2036
Macon County	Charles Biles	<a href="mailto:bilesc1@k12tn.net">bilesc1@k12tn.net</a>	(615) 666-2125
Manchester City	Richie Clark	<a href="mailto:clarkr@k12tn.net">clarkr@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 728-2316
Marion County	Toby Wilson-White	<a href="mailto:twilson@mctns.net">twilson@mctns.net</a>	(423) 942-0945
Marshall County	Lisa Ventura	<a href="mailto:ventural@k12tn.net">ventural@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 359-1581
Maryville City	Dr. Sandra Earnest	<a href="mailto:searnest@ci.maryville.tn.us">searnest@ci.maryville.tn.us</a>	(865) 982-7121
Mauri County	Robert Busch	<a href="mailto:buschr@k12tn.net">buschr@k12tn.net</a>	(931) 381-1474
McKenzie SSD	See Carroll County	-	
McMinn County	Vant Hardaway	<a href="mailto:hardawayv1@k12tn.net">hardawayv1@k12tn.net</a>	(423) 744-1658
McNairy County	Stephanie Brown	<a href="mailto:browns@mcnairy.org">browns@mcnairy.org</a>	(731) 645-9366
Meigs County	David Brown	<a href="mailto:david@meigsCounty.net">david@meigsCounty.net</a>	(423) 334-5793
Memphis City	Dr. Joris Ray	<a href="mailto:rayjorism@mcsk12.net">rayjorism@mcsk12.net</a>	(901) 416-2200
Metro/Nashville Public	None	-	(615) 259-8772
Milan SSD	Sam Rhodes	<a href="mailto:rhodess@milanssd.org">rhodess@milanssd.org</a>	(731) 686-0844
Monroe County	Tim Blakenship	<a href="mailto:tim@monroe.k12.tn.us">tim@monroe.k12.tn.us</a>	(423) 442-2373

## Appendix B: District Alternative Education Coordinators

Moore County	Jack Sisk	<a href="mailto:jackie.sisk@tennk12tn.net">jackie.sisk@tennk12tn.net</a>	(931) 759-7303
Morgan County	Ronnie Wilson	<a href="mailto:wilsonr@mcsmail.net">wilsonr@mcsmail.net</a>	(423) 346-6214
Oak Ridge City	Sherrie Fairchild-Keys	<a href="mailto:sfairchild-keys@ortn.edu">sfairchild-keys@ortn.edu</a>	(865) 425-3155
Obion County	Dale Hollowell	<a href="mailto:hollowellD@k12tn.net">hollowellD@k12tn.net</a>	(731) 885-9743
Oneida SSD	Rachel Joiner	<a href="mailto:rjoiner@oneidaschools.org">rjoiner@oneidaschools.org</a>	(423) 569-8912
Overton County	Terry Melton	<a href="mailto:terry.douglas.melton@us.army.mil">terry.douglas.melton@us.army.mil</a>	(931) 823-9388
Paris SSD	Norma Gerrell	<a href="mailto:norma.gerrell@parisssd.org">norma.gerrell@parisssd.org</a>	(731) 642-9322
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According to the Comptroller's report on alternative education titled *Tennessee's Alternative Schools*, one of the first alternative schools in our state originated in Dickson County in the late seventies (2005, p. 2). Former Juvenile Judge William D. Field, Sr. identified a true need for alternatives to students being expelled or suspended from school (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 2). In 1984, the General Assembly passed a bill authorizing the establishment of alternative schools for those who were continually having disciplinary problems in their traditional school environment (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 8). The legislature soon amended that bill in 1986 to *require* an alternative school for students in grades seven through twelve (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 8).

The Education Improvement Act (EIA) was passed by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1992. This mandated that any school district serving students in grades seven through twelve have at least one alternative education program (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005 p. 3). The state legislature later authorized LEAs to create alternative programs for grades one through six. The General Assembly also passed legislation that prevented students from graduating from an alternative school (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 8).

In 1996, the General Assembly authorized the Department of Education to establish a pilot alternative school program, one in each grand division (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 8). The state legislature also mandated that the State Board of Education provide a curriculum for alternative schools focused on reforming students. In response, the Board released *Alternative School Program Standards* in 2000 (Comptroller of the Treasury, 2005, p. 8-9). In 2004, the Senate passed Joint Resolution 746 that required the Office of Education Accountability of the Comptroller's Office to conduct a study of alternative schools in Tennessee. That report was released in April of 2005.

More recently (2006), the General Assembly amended *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404* to require the establishment of an Advisory Council, referred to as the Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education. The Advisory Council is charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Consider any issue, problem or matter related to alternative education presented to it by the Governor, the Commissioner, or the State Board of Education, and give advice thereon.
2. Study proposed plans for alternative education programs or curricula to determine if the plans or curricula should be adopted.
3. Study alternative education programs or curricula implemented in Tennessee school systems to determine the effectiveness of the programs or curricula, and alternative education programs or curricula implemented in other states to determine if the programs or curricula should be adopted in Tennessee schools.
4. Consider rules of governance of alternative schools and make recommendations concerning rules of governance.
5. Make an annual report to the Governor, the education committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education on the status of alternative education in Tennessee.

In 2007, Public Chapter Number 517 mandated a transition plan for students entering and leaving an alternative education setting and establishes greater accountability measures to include monitoring academic and behavioral progress of students. Public Chapter Number 211 required that the Advisory Council for Alternative Education study issues relating to the establishment of pilot alternative school programs. Finally, Bill Public Chapter Number 455 required the Department of Education to create a pilot project for the 2007-2008 school year in Davidson County.

With the release of the first annual Alternative Education Report in January of 2008, the Council acknowledged the need to examine the following question, "What do we really mean by alternative education?" Due to the complexity of alternative education in our state, the Council proposed that the

State Board of Education adopt a much broader definition that encompassed all alternative education programs in Tennessee. The Council recommended that the Board adopt a new, more contemporary definition of alternative education. The Council proposed that the following definition of alternative education be adopted: ***“A nontraditional academic program designed to meet the student's educational, behavioral and social needs.”***

In August of 2008, the Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education in conjunction with the State Board of Education released *Alternative Education Program Standards*. The model standards address the following broad categories: mission and environment, governance, transitional planning, support services, parent and community engagement, staffing and professional development, individualized learner plans, life skills, curriculum and instruction, student assessment, and monitoring and program assessment. The standards replaced the previously adopted *Alternative School Program Standards* from 2000.

In February of 2009, the Advisory Council released *A Feasibility Study Related to the Establishment of Alternative Programs in Tennessee* with specific recommendations on how to drive quality by enriching funds for alternative education. Additionally, in February of 2009, the Council hosted the first annual Student Discipline and Alternative Education Institute. Over three hundred educators attended the first Institute.

In October of 2009, the Council joined with the National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) on the first ever southeastern regional summit on alternative education. Partnering with the organization, and our friendly neighbors, this conference explored best practice, national trends, and allowed alternative educators an opportunity to collaborate with other practitioners outside of the state. The first summit was held in Rogers, Arkansas.

The Council also recently published (February of 2010) an executive brief entitled *Promoting High Quality Alternative Education: An Update from the Advisory Council*. In the brief the Council set forth several legislative recommendations/priorities which include the following: redefine alternative education, establish an *Exemplary Practices in Alternative Education Award*, investigate ways to enrich funding, and create a state-level position to support alternative teachers, students, and parents.